

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 7 January 2013 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council
Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Ken Atack, Lead Member for Financial Management
Councillor Norman Bolster, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures
Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Public Protection
Councillor Nigel Morris, Lead Member for Clean and Green
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Performance and Customers

Also Present: Councillor Andrew Beere, in place of Councillor Patrick Cartledge, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor Tim Emptage, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Councillor Nicholas Mawer, Chairman Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board (for agenda item 7)

Apologies for absence: Councillor Patrick Cartledge, Leader of the Labour Group

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
Calvin Bell, Director of Development
Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement
Martin Henry, Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

79 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

6. Council Investment in District Sports Facilities Post 2012.

Councillor Nicholas Turner, Non Statutory Interest, as Cherwell District Council's appointed representative on the Oxfordshire Sports Partnership.

80 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

81 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

82 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

Minute 78: Acquisition of Crown House, Banbury

Resolutions (1) and (2) to be public resolutions as set out below:

- (1) That the Head of Regeneration and Housing be authorised to make a formal offer to the owner of the Crown House Site based on the most recent valuation verified by an independent valuer as reflecting the open market value for the property.
- (2) That, subject to the Head of Law and Governance and the Head of Finance and Procurement being satisfied that the necessary legal and financial tests are met, the Head of Regeneration and Housing, in consultation with the Head of Law and Governance, the Head of Finance and Procurement, the Leader of the Council, the Lead Member for Housing and the Lead Member for Estates and the Economy be authorised to proceed with CPO proceedings, should the owner of the Crown House site not accept the open market value offer

83 **Council Investment in District Sports Facilities Post 2012**

The Director of Community and Environment submitted a report which identified the need for investment in the stock of the Council's current and proposed sports facilities and to do so in a manner which responds to the increased demand for sports participation arising from the highly successful 2012 Olympic Games.

In considering the report, Executive members commended the proposal and commented that in the long term it would be important to review how the fund was topped up for maintenance, repair and future improvements to facilities.

Councillor Tim Emptage (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) and Councillor Andy Beere (in attendance on behalf on the Leader of the Labour Group) added their support to the proposal.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to the need for formal approval of full Council, the establishment of a Cherwell District Council medium term Olympic Legacy Fund to support increased sporting participation in football, cricket, rugby, hockey, athletics and tennis be agreed.

- (2) That it be agreed that investment in the Council's stock of existing and proposed facilities which meet the above requirement (resolution 1) should be given priority, especially where there is a focus on sports participation by young people.
- (3) That the first call on the fund be the facility investment projects for North Oxfordshire Academy Athletics Track, Kidlington and Gosford Leisure centre Artificial Turf Pitch, Stratfield Brake and the Phase 2 balance of funding for the SW Bicester Sports Village as detailed in the draft capital programme.

Reasons

If the Council does not invest in the facilities, then over time, sporting usage will fall. This has consequences not only for level of club use and participation but consequential affects down stream on the health of our community both in terms of the physical health and well being of residents and in social well being as there is potential for increased anti social behaviour if there are not the opportunities for positive activities, particularly for young people.

This Olympic Legacy approach will help to coordinate investment across the District to ensure availability of facilities and with some opportunities to achieve procurement savings.

If the Executive is minded to set up an Olympic Legacy fund, it is proposed that those capital investment requirements for sports facilities included in the draft 2013/14 capital programme become the first call on the fund. Future decisions on further calls on the balance of the fund will be preceded by detailed consideration by the Executive on each proposal.

Options

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Option One | Do nothing- facilities will gradually fall into a state of disrepair and be withdrawn from use. |
| Option Two | Piecemeal investment as and when individual facilities require investment through annual cycle of bids through the Council's capital programme. |
| Option Three | A planned approach through an Olympic Legacy fund to secure benefits of developing a District wide approach and maximise opportunities for joint procurement and reduced costs. This is the recommended option |

The Head of Finance and Procurement submitted a report which provided the first of two opportunities that the Executive had to shape and refine the appending plans before the final budget was presented to the Council on the

27 February 2013. The Council has to adopt a budget for 2013/14 as the basis for calculating its level of Council Tax and has to base that budget on its plans for service delivery during the year, recognising any changes in service demand that may arise in future years.

In introducing the report the Lead Member for Financial Management reported that the draft General Fund Revenue budget has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines agreed by the Executive at its meeting on 1 October 2012 which were based on a 5% reduction in government funding. The Government announced its provisional settlement on 19 December 2012 which showed a 5.4% reduction in 2013/14 grant funding and a 15% reduction in 2014/15.

The Lead Member for Financial Management confirmed that the Council would meet its 2012/13 public promise to deliver at least £800,000 of budget reductions by April 2013. To date £1,009,000 had been achieved which had been built into the first draft of the budget.

The Executive was advised that the projected shortfall at draft 1 required a further reduction in costs or increase in income of £230,000. A number of areas to eliminate the deficit had been identified and the outcome of these reviews and their implication on the current budget shortfall would be presented to the February meeting of Executive in February 2013. It was confirmed that at this stage it was expected a balanced budget for 2013/14 would be achieved without the need to use any New Homes Bonus, business rate growth or general reserves.

The Lead Member for Financial Management reported on Council Tax localisation whereby eligible residents received a discount on their council tax rather than a benefit. This meant that the tax base would be reduced for all precepting authorities and most parish Councils would see a shortfall in their funding. Government guidance indicated that the billing authority should work with parishes on the distribution of the council tax reduction grant funding. It was proposed that CDC agree to passport an appropriate element of the council tax reduction grant to parishes to help mitigate their financial risk. Any further shortfalls will be subject of individual negotiations with individual parishes. Approval of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, revised discounts and exemption and the final taxbase would be sought at full Council on 21 January 2013.

The Lead Member updated Executive on business rate pooling. The announcement of the Government settlement had confirmed the business rate baselines. As a result of this information and change to levy rates the pool was now not financially attractive and the request to be part of the Oxfordshire pool had been withdrawn.

Councillor Mawer, Chairman of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board (R&PSB), presented the recommendations and conclusions of the Boards budget scrutiny review. As part of the review, the Board had considered the context to the revenue and capital budgets for 2013/14 and focussed on discretionary budgets and the largest budget – environmental services. The Board also considered the budgetary implications of the

welfare reform changes – administration subsidy issues and the implications for the homelessness budgets.

The Board had dedicated a large part of the budget scrutiny review to the capital bids including the scoring process. In considering the capital bids, the Board had noted that capital spend was projected to be £18m in 2012/13. Based on the current programme and profiled expenditure capital receipts were forecast to be at less than £20m in March 2013. If current expenditure continued and the council did increase its capital pot, it will no longer be a debt free authority.

On behalf of the Board, Councillor Mawer thanked the Head of Finance and Procurement, her team and all Lead Officers who had supported and contributed to the 2013/14 budget scrutiny process.

The Executive thanked Councillor Mawer and the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board for their hard work undertaking the budget scrutiny review.

In considering the Board's recommendations relating to capital bids, the Executive agreed the following amendments:

- Financial System Upgrade: If any implications in the specification connected to document capture and storage then defer any expenditure until final decision on the bid for a Corporate – Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) and the ensuing detailed business case.
- Highfield Depot Feasibility: Original bid of £200k to be reinstated to incorporate proposed redevelopment of office and welfare facilities at Highfield Depot in addition to a feasibility study
- Community Facilities Grant Scheme: To become Community Facilities Loan Scheme
- Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council Customer Services Desktop as a Service (DaaS): Include this bid in the proposed Capital Programme 2013/14 subject to similar approval by South Northamptonshire Council.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft revenue budget be agreed subject to the amendments to the proposed capital programme 2013/14 detailed in resolution (2).
- (2) That the recommendations of the scrutiny reviews of discretionary expenditure and the capital programme that were considered at the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board meetings October 2012 to December 2012 be noted and endorsed subject to the following amendments:
 - Financial System Upgrade: If any implications in the specification connected to document capture and storage then defer any expenditure until final decision on the bid for a Corporate – Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) and the ensuing detailed business case.

- Highfield Depot Feasibility: Original bid of £200k to be reinstated to incorporate proposed redevelopment of office and welfare facilities at Highfield Depot in addition to a feasibility study
 - Community Facilities Grant Scheme: To become Community Facilities Loan Scheme
 - Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council Customer Services Desktop as a Service (DaaS): Include this bid in the proposed Capital Programme 2013/14 subject to similar approval by South Northamptonshire Council
- (3) That no further matters to those set out in these resolutions be requested to be taken into consideration in producing a balanced budget for the meeting of the Executive on 4 February 2013.
- (4) That the passporting of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) grant to local preceptors be endorsed.
- (5) That the decision taken in Oxfordshire not to progress with a pool be noted.

Reasons

There is a statutory requirement for the Council to set a balanced budget by 11 March 2013 and this report provides a first draft of the 2013/14 revenue and capital budget.

Options

Option One To review draft revenue budget to date and consider actions arising.

Option Two To approve or reject the recommendations above or request that Officers provide additional information.

85 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

86 The Oxford and Central Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes and South East Midlands City Deals

The Director of Development submitted an exempt report which sought consideration of the council's participation within the Oxford and Central Oxfordshire and the Milton Keynes and South East Midlands City Deals.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That officers be requested to continue engaging Cherwell District Council with the two city deals that cover Oxford and Central Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes and the South East Midlands and report back to the Executive at the appropriate time.

Reasons

This report is presented to the Executive for them to determine whether they wish to continue to engage with both city deal processes.

Options

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Option One | To continue to engage with both city deals |
| Option Two | To engage with only one of the bids and, if so, to determine which one |
| Option Three | Not to continue with either bid |

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Chairman:

Date: